



RESEARCH PAPER

**A Linguistic Analysis of Code-Switching in Pakistani Billboard Advertisements**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to analyze the sociolinguistic concept of code-switching in Pakistani billboard advertisements. The textual messages in billboard ads are usually drafted very carefully but sometimes there are messages which are used without considering the nature of the ad. The focus of the study is to identify the dominant language in billboards and the linguistic categories which are most commonly employed for code-switching. Forty-one billboards are examined out of which 20 are identified for code-switching and are further scrutinized for linguistic analysis. The qualitative method is used, and a descriptive approach is adopted for the textual analysis of billboard advertisements. The findings of the study indicate the dominance and prevalence of the English language over the Urdu language in billboard advertisements. In almost half of the billboards, advertisers used code-switching, and the English language is embedded in the Urdu language to make slogans interesting and appealing. Researchers are recommended to analyze the impact of such code switching advertising media on youth and on their daily linguistic practices.

**KEYWORDS** Code-Switching, Intersentential Code-Switching, Intrasentential Code-Switching, Hybridization, Synthesis, Word Insertion

**Introduction**

Advertising is believed to be one of the most influential tools for conveying information about institutions and products. It also plays a significant role in molding peoples' perceptions and eventually enormously influences their choices and decisions. Advertisements are a great source to inform the public about a product's availability, type of product, place of purchase, etc. (Olateju, 2006). The main function of advertisements is to convey the message to the maximum number of people. The language used in billboards is usually short, precise, simple, and clear because its purpose is to deliver information to as many people as possible that's why the fewest words are employed. Billboards are used for advertising a variety of products and sometimes for spreading awareness about certain social issues to bring awareness to the common public. The use of language and images on billboards is usually appealing and eye catchy in order to grab and hold the attention of the people (Ojiakor, Onebunne, & Ekezie, 2019). The textual messages in billboard ads are usually drafted very carefully but sometimes there are messages which are used without considering the nature of the ad. One of the strategies being extensively curated in advertisements is to wrap maximum information into the fewest possible words in order to arouse diverse maximum responses (Osundare, 1996).

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society and it includes dialect, accent, jargon, language variation, registers, code-switching/mixing, language

contact, and gender. The language of advertisements also depends upon the participants of the discourse as the billboard advertisements of cosmetics, cooking -related products often use the language of day-to-day use. Most of the billboards, which are related to the banking and investment sector, employ Standard English as their client base is of educated, middle-class or upper middle -class families (Pathak, 2018).

English as a lingua franca widens the lexicon of spoken languages in all over the world (Shooshtari & Allahbakhsh, 2013). English language as a “donor language” and also as a language of science and technology and an “indispensable part of advertising discourse” has a great impact on the lexicon of other languages (Riaz & Khan, 2013, p. 46; Zhiganova, 2016, 226). People use English expressions for associating themselves with the aristocracy and educated class. It is the reason for variation in language all over the world and this variation is the reason for code-mixing and code-switching.

Code-mixing is mixing or shifting between two languages in a conversation (Skiba, 1997, p. 47). “Mixing means the transfer of the units of code A into code B at intersentential and intrasentential levels” (Kachru, 1986). Mushtaq and Zahra (2012) distinguish code-switching from code mixing as for them code-switching is the switch or shift from one language to the other which takes place in longer stretches of language at the clause or sentence level, whereas code-mixing is about shifts in smaller units of language such as words or phrases.

“Many words of the English language are known and used by people in Pakistan, who have never studied the language. Words like plate, glass, television, dressing table, sorry, and thank you are frequently used in routine communication without any awareness of code-mixing” (Ehsan & Aziz, 2014). Hence, the variation in the Urdu language because of the impact of the English language is important to study and analyze. With the passage of time, the Urdu language is losing its importance because of the high prestige of English (Mushtaq & Zahra, 2012).

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the language use and code-switching that appears on billboard advertisements. There are a number of reasons for selecting this topic; firstly, there is not much research work being done on billboard advertisements in Pakistan. Though, exhaustive research studies are conducted on code-switching in TV commercials, talk shows, teaching and learning, and print advertisements but hardly any billboard ads in Pakistan. Secondly, the analyses of code-switched advertisements done in the past had been either from the social perspective or the impact of such advertisements on people had been studied, but the magnitude of English language prevalence and the study of linguistic categories on billboard advertisements have not been touched upon yet.

## **Literature Review**

Advertisements are aimed to sell products and services and the language of advertisements is skillfully designed to persuade people and to touch their emotions and feelings (Akinbode, 2012). Now advertisers seek to attract the attention of the wider public by employing certain strategies to make their advertisements look trendy and modern as well as impart global touch. Moreover, advertisements especially advertising billboards leave a stronger impact and impression on youth’s cognition which leads to develop ideologies and conditions stereotypes (Habib & Hussain, 2024). Code-switching or code-mixing is one such strategy to disseminate information about products, services, and institutions in an appealing way. English words are employed in Urdu to make the

advertising messages bewitching, interesting, and convincing (Riaz, 2019). Shooshatri and Allahbakhsh (2013) highlighted some of the features of bilingual advertising discourse by asserting that English is used by advertisers as it is the language of technology and associated with progress as well as it has a fun element and capacity for memorability.

There is a number of research studies conducted on code-switching in many languages and in different domains i.e. media, talk shows, textbooks, magazines, etc. In the same vein, some studies are carried out on the analysis of advertising language. The type of language used in advertisements is usually generalizable, versatile, dissimilar, and innovative which always grabs the attention of the researchers to investigate the underlying patterns. Many appealing and persuasive techniques are used in the designing of ads. Language mixing or code-mixing is a discovering stream of research in the area of advertisements. Tina (2015) studied the patterns of code-switching on advertising signboards in the linguistic landscape of Dhaka and revealed that English names were preferred over Bengali names on signboards for attracting customers and make signboards look stylish and trendy.

Yuliana et al. (2015) investigated the code-switching and code-mixing in the two groups of Indonesian celebrities and found the different frequencies of lexical borrowing in the speech of celebrities with native-speaker parents and multilingual celebrities. Insertion or alteration was common in code-mixing whereas inter-sentential code-switching was preferred over intra-sentential by both groups. Zhiganova (2016) investigated the impact of code-switching in slogans of German TV advertisements on German-speaking people was studied and most people preferred German slogans while viewed English slogans negatively by asserting that English slogans though appear and sound modern and attractive but less intelligible and least authentic.

Senaratni (2017) identified the dominant use of nominalization, hybridization, nativization, and coinage as the leading aspects of code-switching in print and electronic advertisements in Srilanka. Though this code mixing of English and Sinhala is still not much prevalent yet it indicates the change in social trends and linguistic choices of native speakers especially its appeal to people in urban settings.

There are various research studies conducted on code switching and code mixing in different languages such as Chinese, Spanish, Hindi, German, and Korean carried out by Kia et al. (2011), Vizcaíno (2011), Nandi (2013), Kandace (2004) and Sinhee (2006) respectively. Code-switching is also studied in order to analyze its usage in different areas like public perception and attitude, educational settings, literature and entertainment, advertisements, and gender differences by several researchers including Awan and Sheeraz (2011), Humaira (2012), Talaat (2002), Hsu (2013), Riaz and Khan (2013).

Code-switching and code-mixing are also observed in billboard advertisements as Akinyi (2017) analyzed the code-mixing of English and Kiswahili in Kenyan advertising media. He selected print advertisements of three telecom companies and six commercial banks. He analyzed the advertisements on the basis of code-mixing and found mixed forms, new words, and new combinations of morphemes which were the source of attraction for onlookers and customers. Kathpalia and Wee Ong (2015) carried out a research study to investigate the use of 'Hinglish' code mixing in Indian hoarding advertisements. The findings of the study reveal that mixing Hindi and English imparts a colloquial flavor which is essential for creativity. Moreover, this blend of Hinglish also reflects the composite culture of progressive India which juxtaposes local traditional

social practices with global modern values. Pathak (2018) asserts that the 'chutanification of language' makes advertising billboards fascinating and engaging. In a ready-to-drink billboard advertisement, the use of Indonesian and English code-switching suggests that the target audience is youth, a symbol of lavishness and modernity (de Silva, 2017). English is employed on billboards for commercial purposes to indicate elements of prestige, luxury, and urban lifestyle whereas Indonesian for national identity to cover a wider target audience (de Silva, 2014).

The present study investigates code-switching between English and Urdu by employing the following models because these models aptly provide insights into the concepts of code-switching and matrix and embedded language and help to examine the proposed concepts accurately and comprehensively.

Code-switching is a linguistic strategy taken from sociolinguistics that refers to the use of two codes or languages within one communicative instance in which a bilingual or multilingual speaker switches between two or more codes (Yua, 1997). Code-switching can be at sentence, clause, or phrase levels, hence, texts can be divided into Intra Sentential and Inter Sentential types which were proposed by Poplack (1980), though, she presented three divisions or kinds, namely; Tag-switching, Intra-sentential, and Inter-sentential code-switching

### **Tag-Switching**

This term refers to the inclusion of a tag from one language into the statement or sentence of another language. For example:

**'I think**, humain yahan sy chalna chahiye.' (I think we should go from here)

Here the tag 'I think' (written in bold font) is taken from the English language and the rest of the statement is written in Urdu.

This kind of code-switching is not dealt with in this particular research paper.

### **Intersentential Switching**

This term refers to code-switching, which takes place between sentences, 'the alternation in a single discourse between two languages' (Appel and Muysken 1987: p.118).

For example, **I have visited your uncle's place**. Kaam krne kay liye woh achi jagah hai. (I have visited your uncle's place. That's a good place for work)

The first sentence is in English (written in bold font) and it strictly adheres to English syntax whereas the other sentence is in Urdu and follows Urdu syntax.

### **Intrasentential Switching**

This term refers to the type of code-switching which takes place within a sentence. A part of a word, or a word itself, a compound word, a phrase, or a clause of another language is inserted within a sentence of the dominant language.

For instance: Ahmed fazool kammon mei apna **time** zayah kar raha hai.

The whole sentence is in Urdu with the exception of the word 'time', which is an English language word, and 'time' has a replacement word in Urdu that is 'waqt'.

This type of code-switching is often called code-mixing.

The terms for the host, recipient, or dominant language and the language from which the word is borrowed or taken in the utterance of the host language are extracted from the constraint-based model of Myers-Scotton (1993) known as (MLF model) Matrix Language Frame Model (Keller, 2020). Myers-Scotton used the term Matrix Language (ML) for the dominant language, in which the sentence is uttered or written whereas Embedded Language (EL) refers to the language from which the word, phrase, or clause is taken and inserted in the utterance or sentence of Matrix Language. It indicates that a clause, a phrase, or a word insertion within a sentence makes involvement of vocabulary from two entirely opposite languages, in that case, there is always one dominant grammar and that is in almost all the cases of Matrix Language (ibid).

MLF model was first presented in 1993 and later several amendments were made but the main objectives remained the same. One of the major objectives is 'to show how surface realizations (i.e. production) are linked to how language is structured (i.e. competence)' (Myers-Scotton, 2002: p.14). She believes that languages in code-switching are not symmetrically used (ibid).

"Psycholinguistically, the bilingual's two or more languages do not achieve equal activation in bilingual speech. Decisions (largely unconscious) made at the pre-linguistic conceptual level result in one language dominating (the Matrix Language sets the grammatical frame of such speech). The less dominant language (the Embedded Language) participates largely by supplying lexical elements that are integrated into that frame" (Myers-Scotton, 2002: p.16).

Many researchers have designed different frameworks to examine the processes for code-switching. In this research, the framework proposed by Kachru (1978), which was later amended by Rasul (2006) in order to make it work in the Pakistani Urdu language context, is used for text analysis of code-switched billboard advertisements. She made slight changes by adding and eliminating a few categories to make it more effective for the study of code-switching in the Pakistani scenario.

There are three main categories, namely; Insertions, Hybridization, and Synthesis, which have further, sub-categories.

### **Insertions**

The process of insertion is when a single word, phrase, clause, or sentence from another language is employed in the structure of a dominant language. It is noted that such insertions do not usually interfere with and disturb the structure or syntax of the host or dominant language. Insertions include a) Single word: Noun Insertion, Adjective Insertion, and Adverb Insertion. b) Phrase Insertion: Noun Phrase insertion, Prepositional Phrase insertion, and Verb Phrase insertion. Compound words are also enclosed in this group. c) Clause Insertion. d) Sentence Insertion.

### **Hybridization**

Hybridization takes place when the linguistic category of a word or a phrase is changed into another one as a result of mixing two languages. Code-switching is

systematic and has certain constraints on the mixing of languages. If constraints are not taken into account the resultant item will not be socially and linguistically accepted. For instance, hybridized noun phrases are bound to take modifiers from one language and nouns from another because of linguistic constraints. This category includes, a) Hybridization within Words: within Single Words and in Compound Words. b) Hybridization in Units: in Noun Phrases and Verb Phrases.

### **Synthesis**

This presents the combination of languages into a coherent one. For instance, the name or title of a person or organization is a combination of two languages. This category includes Abbreviations and Acronyms, Modes and Terms of Address, Names and Titles, Reduplication, Inflection attachments, Repetition, Tags and Fillers, Greetings, Blessings, Interjections, Connectors, and Miscellaneous. The selection of this particular framework has some implications. Billboard advertisements require few words with maximum meaning, which results in the use of less text. The other frameworks have approaches, which are apt for extensive and elaborative texts. Hence, such frameworks are not appropriate for linguistic analysis of billboard advertisements.

### **Material and Methods**

The current study has used qualitative method and descriptive approach is adopted for data analysis while results in numbers are also described in words. There are 41 billboards chosen to see the prevalence of English, Urdu, or both languages, 18 billboards out of 41 are completely in English and 3 are completely in Urdu. Whereas, 20 billboards have code-switched items which are sampled by keeping in mind the purposive sampling technique to find the prevalence of the English language in Urdu language and vice versa and to figure out the magnitude of code-switching. These billboards are textually and linguistically analyzed for code-switching. Matrix language and embedded language are identified and the frequency of code-switched words is elaborated in words for better understanding. The advertising billboards are divided into English ads, Urdu ads, and bilingual ads but only bilingual ads are chosen for linguistic analysis.

The pictures of billboard ads are taken from actual locations and from online sources. These are checked for code-switching/code-mixing and data is presented in tables. The billboard ads are transcribed for textual, and linguistic analysis. Firstly, the billboard ads are checked to identify the prevalent or dominant language as well as the bilingual ones. Secondly, bilingual ads are checked for code-switched items that either code-switching is at sentence level or within a sentence according to Poplack's (1980) categorization. Myers-Scotton's (1993) Frame Model (MLF) is used for the identification of Matrix Language (ML) and Embedded Language (EL) in code-switched billboards. Kachru's (1978) framework, which was used by Rasul (2006) with some modifications is employed in this study for linguistic analysis of code-switched billboard advertisements. All the numeric frequencies are presented in tabular form and text analysis is interpreted later.

### **Results and Discussion**

In order to measure the prevalence of the English language and the magnitude or the extent to which code-switching or code-mixing is taking place in Pakistani billboard advertisements, the data is illustrated in tables. The samples are divided into three

categories, namely; complete English advertisement billboards, complete Urdu advertisement billboards, and code-switched or bilingual advertisement billboards. The frequency is represented in the table below:

**Table 1**  
**Frequency of English, Urdu and code-switched advertising billboards**

Total Number of billboards	41	
Complete English advertising billboards	18	44%
Complete Urdu advertising billboards	3	7%
Code-switched advertising billboards	20	49%

The table above shows that code-switched billboards take the lead and are the highest in number. Complete English billboards are more in number than complete Urdu advertising billboards. It throws light on the latest trends taking place in advertisements in general and in billboard advertisements in particular.

**Table 2**  
**Categorization of code-switched advertising billboards**

	Total	Percentage
Code-switched/Bilingual advertising billboards	20	
Intersentential advertising billboards	4	20%
Intrasentential advertising billboards	16	80%

The table above shows that out of 41 advertising billboards, 20 billboards are bilingual or have patterns of code-switching. 4 out of 20 billboards have code-switching at the intersentential level which means that less code-switching takes place at the intersentential level that is one sentence from Urdu and the other from English or vice versa. 16 out of 20 ads have code-switching at the intrasentential level, which shows that the majority of bilingual or code-switched billboard advertisements are having word, phrase, or clause insertions from another language embedded in the dominant language sentence.

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of Matrix language in advertising billboards**

	Total	Percentage
Intrasentential code switched advertising billboards	16	
Billboards with Urdu as Matrix Language	15	94%
Billboards with English as Matrix Language	1	6%

The table illustrates that Urdu is most frequently used as a matrix language in code-switched advertising billboards. Urdu being a national Language is given preference in a code-switching context. There is only one code-switched advertising billboard in which English is used as ML which is sample no. 1 whereas the rest of the billboards have text in which Urdu is the ML, sample no. 2-16. In order to illustrate the frequency of words in both languages, the following table shows the exact figures.

**Table 4**  
**Number of English and Urdu language words in code switched advertising billboards**

	Total	Percentage
Total number of words in code switched billboards	155	
Number of English words	53	34%
Number of Urdu words	102	66%

This table made it evident that Urdu vocabulary dominates bilingual/code-switched billboard advertisements.

Rasul's (2006) framework is quite detailed and enfolds even the slightest linguistic unit. But in this study, all categories are not being touched and only those categories are included, which are part of sample billboard texts. First, the frequency of linguistic categories is presented in tabular form in percentages. Later, the interpretation of text analysis is presented in detail.

**Table 5**  
**Frequency of linguistic categories (Insertions) in code switched advertising billboards**

Sample no.	Noun	Adjective	Adverb	Noun Phrase	Compound Word	Sentence Insertion	Total
1			1				1
2		1					1
5	1						1
6	1						1
7			1				1
8	1						1
9		1					1
10				1			1
11	1						1
12	2						2
13		1					1
14					1		1
17				1			1
19	1						1
20						1	1
Total	7	3	2	2	1	1	16

The table shows that Noun Insertion is the most common and frequently used linguistic category in code-switched billboard advertisements.

**Table 6**  
**Frequency of linguistic categories (Hybridization) in code switched advertising billboards**

Sample no.	Within Words	Within Units Noun Phrase	Total
3		1	1
4		1	1
7		1	1
14		1	1
15		1	1
Total		5	5

The above table shows that there are only 5 instances of the hybridization process in code-switching of billboard advertisements and all these are within the unit of Hybridized Noun Phrase.

**Table 7**  
**Frequency of linguistic categories (Synthesis) in code switched advertising billboards**

Sample no.	Name/Title	Miscellaneous	Total
15		1	1
16		1	1
18	1		1
Total	1	2	3

This table shows that the synthesis process has taken place thrice on code-switched billboard advertisements. There is only one instance where the name/title of a local Pakistani super league team is used in sample no. 18.



**Table 8**  
**Number of code-switched items**

Insertions	16
Hybridization	5
Synthesis	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

This table shows that there is a total of 24 code-switched items in 20 bilingual/code-switched billboard advertisements. The most frequent linguistic category is insertions. There are a few billboards, which have more than one linguistic category, i.e., sample no. 7, 12, 14, and 15.

The interpretation of text analysis brings interesting information about certain processes, which are responsible for systematic code-switching syntactically. Code-switched words or phrases are underlined and words of other languages are italicized for better understanding.

### Sample no. 1

'Live it *abhi*'.

This is a carbonated drink advertising billboard. It is an example of Intrasentential code-switching in which Matrix Language (ML) is English and only 1 word '*abhi*' (italicized) is taken from Urdu, which is an adverb written in Roman Urdu. '*Abhi*' means 'now' in English and it is placed in English syntax to give a different touch. This is the only example of Urdu language word insertion in an English sentence. The text of this ad points towards the liveliness that this drink gives you, drink it and start living your life to the fullest from now.



Figure 1. Pepsi

### Sample no. 2

'Daygi haleem jaisa *Perfect* maza'.

This advertising billboard is an example of Intrasentential code-switching in which ML is Urdu. The whole sentence is written in Urdu script with an adjective word insertion from the English language written in Urdu script. The word '*perfect*' has an Urdu equivalent, which are 'kamil' or 'behtareen' in Urdu. The billboard text of this mixed spices product ad is about its instant haleem recipe mix, which is a well-known

traditional Pakistani dish. The slogan is an indication of the special and perfect taste this particular product gives to the haleem.



Figure 2. Shan

### Sample no. 3

'Train kay ticket ki khareedari aur addaigi nahayat asaan'.

This sample billboard illustrates a bank advertisement for a convenient payment facility for train tickets. The code-switching has taken place at Intrasentential level. The ML is Urdu written in Urdu script and Embedded Language (EL) is English written in Urdu script. This is an example of hybridized noun phrase 'train kay ticket' which is a combination of English noun (train) + Urdu unit of possession (kay) + English noun (ticket). English words are embedded with an Urdu word, which is not required semantically or syntactically in English, hence is an addition and its English equivalent is not needed. The word 'train' has Urdu replacement as 'railgaari' whereas the word 'ticket' has not any equivalent in Urdu, which can be considered a loan word taken from English vocabulary.



Figure 3. UBL

### Sample no. 4

'Is eid ko roshan karain, humaray best ever nikhar sy'.

This is an Intrasentential code-switched text of an advertising billboard. The ML is Urdu with an embedded English hybridized noun phrase written in Urdu script. It is the combination of the Urdu pronoun 'humaray' + English qualifier 'best ever' + Urdu noun 'nikhar', which makes it a hybridized form. The Urdu equivalent of 'best ever' is 'hamesha rehne wala behtareen', which is avoided due to identity marker of modernization. This billboard advertisement is making a reference to muslim's religious festival of Eid, which is an occasion of celebration and happiness. The text of this ad suggests that make this Eid more vibrant with the use of our fairness cream, which gives the best ever fairness.



Figure 4. Fair & Lovely

#### Sample no. 5

'Jitni zyada shopping, utnay zyada jeetnay kay moowaaqa'.

In this billboard text, code-switching has taken place at Intrasentential level. The text is written in Urdu script. The ML is Urdu in which English noun 'shopping' has been embedded, written in Urdu script. This is an example of English noun insertion in Urdu syntax. The equivalent of 'shopping' in Urdu is 'kharidari', which is becoming less common in Urdu. The simple translation of this billboard ad is that as much you shop, the more are chances of winning.



Figure 5. Jeeto Pakistan

#### Sample no. 6

'Speed par ao.'

This example of code switching is again at Intrasentential level. ML is Urdu with English noun inserted in it. All words are written in Urdu script. This noun insertion has the Urdu equivalent 'raftaar', which most of the time is replaced with the English word 'speed'. This is the text of a mobile network advertising billboard, which is referring to the fast speed of internet service and asks to join the fast-speed network.



Figure 6. Telenor

#### Sample no. 7

'Original khaas taste, tum hi mera pyar everyday'.

This sample depicts code-switching at Intrasentential level. ML is Urdu with one adverb insertion 'every day', making it English embedded. The Urdu equivalent for 'everyday' is 'har roz', which is more common than 'everyday' but here, everyday is used because the name of the product (tea whitener milk powder) is Everyday. This text has another code-switched category of hybridized noun phrase 'original khaas taste', which is a combination of one Urdu qualifier 'khaas' embedded in one English qualifier 'original' and one English noun 'taste'. Though, this kind of syntactic combination is not much usual in conversations, again the word 'khaas', which has the English equivalent 'special', is associated with the slogan of the product. The text of this ad is about the special original taste of a tea mix milk powder and it's so good that you indulge in its flavor and fell in love with it like every day.



Figure 7. Everyday

#### Sample no. 8

'Star tou laina hi hai! Mukammal nushonuma jo nazar aye.'

This is an example of Intrasentential code-switching. The ML is Urdu with an embedded English noun insertion 'star'. The whole text is written in Urdu script except for the name of the product. The translation of 'sitara' is 'star', which is more commonly

used by young Urdu speakers. This is a milk powder billboard advertisement. The text refers to the nutrients, which the use of this product gives to children in their years of growth and provides nourishment because for winning and getting on top to get a star, you must have a strong body and healthy brain.



Figure 8. Nido

#### Sample no. 9

'Khana banay *exciting*'.

This is another example of Intrasentential code-switched text of billboard advertisement. The ML is Urdu with an English-embedded adjective 'exciting', written in Roman Urdu. The word 'exciting' is used in terms of being tempting, which has 'muhariq' or 'dil moh lainay wala' as corresponding words in Urdu. This is a carbonated drink billboard advertisement and the text is about the combination of this drink with food that makes eating food experience exciting.



Figure 9. Pepsi

#### Sample no. 10

'Apnay liye intehaab kijiye kuch naya, naya Olpers, *full cream* ki khoobiyoun kay sath'.

This is a milk product billboard ad. Code-switching has taken place at Intrasentential level, written in Urdu script. The ML is Urdu with an English noun phrase insertion 'full cream'. The word 'full' has an Urdu replacement 'mukammal' whereas the

word 'cream' is mostly used in Urdu as well. Though, the word 'baalayi' is translation of 'cream', which is less common in use. The simple explanation of this text is to make a new selection and choose new Olpers milk with the benefits of full cream.



Figure 10. Olpers

#### Sample no. 11

'Nannhay pait ki bari ghiza, *sachet* mei bhi dastiyaab hai'.

This is a child-processed food powder advertisement. Code-switching is at Intrasentential level. The ML is Urdu with a single English word 'sachet', which is a noun insertion. The text is in Urdu script. 'Sachet' is a loan word, borrowed from English vocabulary and it is used to fulfill the lexical gap found in Urdu. As Li (2002) asserts that code-switching takes place because of lexical gaps when there is the absence of translation equivalents. 'Sachet' has no Urdu replacement, which makes its use the same way as in English. This text refers to the availability of the product in the sachet packing also, which is a nutritious food for toddlers.



Figure 11. Cerelac

#### Sample no. 12

'Zinc barhay meri *family* ki quwat-e-mudafa'at'.

This is the text of the bottled mineral water billboard advertisement. Code-switching is at Intrasentential level. The ML is Urdu with two English noun insertions, 'zinc' and 'family'. It is written in Urdu script. The word 'zinc' is a chemical element known in Urdu as 'jst', which is not used in common daily conversation. The word 'family' has Urdu translation 'Khandaan', which is quite common in use. The simple translation of this text is that Zinc (in the product) increases the immunity of my family.



Figure 12. Nestle Pure Life

### Sample no. 13

'Chatpatta *saucy* Ramazan'.

This code-switched text of a ketchup billboard advertisement is an example of Intrasentential code-switching. The ML is Urdu with an English adjective insertion 'saucy', which has Urdu translation 'chatni' but it doesn't accurately describe the intended meaning, and the English version aptly makes it clear and more appropriate. The text is written in Roman Urdu. This is the text of a ketchup billboard advertisement, which makes reference to the Muslim's holy month of Ramadan; a month of fasting and relishing food at the fast breaking time, and that the use of this product will make your Ramazan spicy and saucy.



Figure 13. Shangrila

**Sample no. 14**

'Mix chai nay world record bana dala'.

The code-switching is at Intrasentential level in this text. The ML is Urdu with two embedded English words, 'mix chai', which is a hybridized noun phrase, and 'world record', which is a compound word insertion at the phrase level. The English word 'mix' (qualifier) is used in Urdu as well though, its corresponding translation is 'mili hui' or 'milna' but the next word 'chai', which is 'tea' (noun) in English makes it a hybridized noun phrase, having English qualifier + Urdu noun. The text is written in Urdu script with exception of 'world record', which is written in English script. This text is about a tea whitener billboard ad, and refers to its mix tea popularity, which made world record of being the most used product.



Figure 14. Everyday

**Sample no. 15**

'Ab make up walay look kay liye no make up'.

This is a fairness cream billboard advertisement text. Code-switching is at intrasentential level with Urdu as Matrix Language (ML). There are two linguistic categories used in this text. 'Make up walay look', which is a hybridized noun phrase. The word 'makeup' which is 'singhar' in Urdu is not used commonly. In fact, 'singhar' is somewhat replaced with 'makeup', and in this context of 'makeup walay look', this Urdu replacement is not fit enough to convey the intended meaning. The same is the case with the English word 'look', which is 'wazzah' in Urdu, does not accurately depict the implied meaning. The other category is synthesis, 'no make up', in which a negative unit 'no' is added with the noun 'makeup' to express the absence of makeup, which makes it like 'singhar nahi'. The text is written in Roman Urdu. The simple explanation of this billboard ad is that for makeup look, you don't need any makeup, just apply our BBcream and have that makeup look.





Figure 15. Fair &amp; Lovely

## Sample no. 16

'Sooper hai yeh dharti, sooper hai har jawaan, sooper hai Pakistan.'

Code-switching in this text is at Intrasentential level. The ML is Urdu with repeated English embedded noun insertion, but this insertion is slightly different because the actual English spellings of this word are 'super', which makes it a spelling variant of 'super'. That is why it is placed in a sub-category of miscellaneous from the Synthesis category. 'Super' in Urdu means 'bohat aala'. This spelling variant is the name of the product as well, which is the reason for its repeated use. The text is written in Urdu text. This billboard ad text has a patriotic element, the slogan says that this country is super, its youngsters are super and Pakistan is super, all written in green and white colours which are the colours of Pakistani flag.



Figure 16. Sooper

## Sample no. 17

'Woh khaas mithas, jo kisi aur mai kahan-share your #khaas dost selfie'.

This is an example of Intersentential code-switching, which falls in the sentence insertion category as well. There are two sentences used for the same billboard advertisement. The first one is in Urdu whereas the other one is in English with an embedded English noun phrase 'khaas dost' means special friend'. The Urdu text is written in Roman Urdu. The simple translation is that this product (biscuit) has a special

sweetness, which is not present in any other such product. They also had a contest for the best selfie with a special friend and the second sentence is an allusion to that to share your selfie with your special friend.



Figure 17. Candi

### Sample no. 18

*'Yehi sach hai-win big with Zalmi meal'.*

This is an example of Intersentential code-switching in which the word 'Zalmi' falls in the synthesis category of name title. 'Zalmi is the name of a local super league cricket team, which is a representative team of Pakistan's city, Peshawar. This word is originally a Pashto word, which means 'youth'. This billboard advertisement is again a kind of allusion to point out the craze of Pakistani people for the sport of cricket. The first sentence is in Urdu language written in Roman Urdu whereas the other sentence is in English. The simple translation is that, this is true that one can win big on the purchase of Zalmi meal. This is an advertisement for McDonald's and they were sponsoring this team and named one of their meals on the Zalmi cricket team in their limited-time offer deals.



Figure 18. McDonald's

### Sample no. 19

*'If you keep problems inside, you'll start looking like one!-khamoshi ka boycott'.*

This text suggests Intersentential code-switching. The first sentence is in English and the other sentence insertion is in Urdu with an English noun insertion 'boycott'. The corresponding word for 'boycott' in Urdu is 'tarq karna', which is not appropriate in this context. Moreover, the word 'boycott' has recently been added to Urdu vocabulary, so

it's a borrowed word from English. The text is written in Roman Urdu. This is a mobile phone network billboard advertisement and the slogan here refers to the benefit of sharing and expressing one's feelings that if you keep your problems inside you then you may look like the image portrayed on the ad, so you must go for boycott and say no to silence.



Figure 19. Djuice Telenor

### Sample no. 20

'jeet hai pehchaan-A true winner is always consistent!'

This is an absolute example of Intersentential code-switching. The first sentence is in Urdu whereas the other sentence is in the English language. It is categorized in sentence insertion. 'Jeet hai pehchaan' means 'winning is identity' in English. This is a promotional advertising billboard of an educational institute and its slogan is mentioned in the bold text, which suggests that a true winner is always made through consistent hard work, and winning is our institute's identity.

This descriptive analysis is an attempt of probing into the linguistic categories and their systematic syntactic relationships within a sentence and between two sentences.



Figure 20. Kips

### Discussion

The results show that the code-switching of English into Urdu is quite obvious and evident. It is taking place enormously not only in day-to-day conversations but is becoming common in written form too. Media plays an important role in propagating it.

TV as well as print advertisements are the perfect tools for prevailing it to a great extent. Billboard advertisements are static symbolic representations of different products and institutions and these ads are no exception to this notion of code-switching. Hence, Pakistani advertisements in general, and billboard advertisements, in particular, are under much influence of code-switched versions of language use. The use of the English language is gradually increasing in billboard advertisements and its rising prevalence is evident from the number of English billboards presented in the results.

The most frequently used Matrix language on code-switched Pakistani billboard advertisements is Urdu. The abundant use of words, phrases, or sentences from the English language resulted in a great number of code-switched words on billboards. This sort of code-switching helped in expounding the process of language hybridization. The most frequent code-switched linguistic categories are noun and noun phrase insertions and hybridized ones.

There are various factors, which play integral roles in the mixing of languages. As far as billboard advertisements are concerned, the economy of words is the first requirement; minimum use of words must convey maximum ideas and meaning. Moreover, language should be such with which people identify themselves. It is different from print and TV ads because the language used on billboards has to be precise, accurate, and systematic for code-switching. Billboard ads usually have catchy slogans to grab the attention of the onlookers as indicated in the results of Akinyi's (2017) research study but billboards with text are intended for the literate people. Thus, the use of the English language makes the slogans persuasive and interesting as well as modern, stylish, and trendy (Tina, 2015; Zhiganova, 2016). English is the language associated with globalization and modernization. This motivation urges people to use English to identify themselves with modernization (Kathpalia & Wee Ong, 2015). English is considered a prestige language (de Silva, 2014) and Pakistan is a post-colonial country, where English people ruled for a long time. Since then, it remained a dominant and powerful language. Its prevalence is almost felt in all spheres and fields of life.

Code-switching is a result of this power and domination with which people consciously or unconsciously attempt to associate themselves. Moreover, Urdu is a language, which is a mixture of Persian, Arabic, and Sankrit, and has words from all these languages, its vocabulary is getting enriched with the loan or borrowed words from English as well to fill the lexical gap. For Trudgill (2000), code-mixing is 'to convey nuances of meaning and personal intention', where a bilingual falls short of words in a language, thus, takes refuge in code-mixing/switching.

There is not much research being conducted in Pakistan on billboard advertisements, so there is a lot of scope for future research endeavors in this area. The same kind of study can be conducted on a larger scale with more number of samples. Billboard advertisements can also be studied from different social and cultural perspectives. Another area for research can be the examination of billboard advertisements from the semiotics perspective because imagery, signs, and symbols also play an important role in billboard advertisements.

## **Conclusion**

This study has revealed the dominance of the English language on billboard advertisements over the Urdu language. The escalating use of code-switching in advertisements is setting new trends, which gives rise to the mixing of English in Urdu.

It enriches vocabulary and adds new words to the Urdu language repertoire. Language hybridization is also the product of code-switching, which is more at the noun and noun phrase level. Bilinguals use code-switching when they fall short of words in a particular language and take words from another language or some words of another language and use them so commonly that a time comes when they become words of that language. Another reason for the extensive use of English is associated with its position as *lingua franca* which gives an impression and air of modernity, universality, and being stylish and trendy. The magnitude of code-switching is quite prominent and this phenomenon is becoming common because the English language is believed to be a language of prestige and modernization.

### **Recommendations**

Moreover, advertisers are recommended to avoid mixing codes in order to prevent the amalgamation of two languages and ruining the identity and authenticity of each unique language. Researchers are recommended to analyze the impact of such code switching advertising media on youth and on their daily linguistic practices.

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